The next issue of CHALLENGE will appear in three weeks, after which we will resume our regular biweekly schedule.

PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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HOT STRIKE SUMMER

CHICAGO

United Kingdom

NEW JERSEY

CALIFORNIA

From Los Angeles to London, workers are in the heat of class struggle. Wherever PLP is present, we brought solidarity to workers. PLP says strikes are schools for communism because that's where the working class grows class consciousness and confidence for building a communist Party and revolution.

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

✰Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✰The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✰Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✰While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✰Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✰Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✰Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✰Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✰Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✰Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Niger Coup, imperialists mine their downfall

On July 26, a group of generals in Niger staged a coup and seized control of the country. Although Niger is no stranger to coups, with five to date, the latest is yet another blow to capitalist rulers' liberal democracy and to U.S. and French imperialism in the Sahel region of Africa. Niger joins Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Chad, and Sudan among nations in the Sahel region of Africa that have dumped U.S.-friendly stooges like ex-President Mohamed Bazoum in favor of military juntas aligned with Russian imperialists. This pivot is a telltale sign that the old U.S.-led liberal world order is imploding.

Despite sanctions and threats of war from the spurned imperialists and their allies in the West African bloc Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the coup leaders are showing no signs of backing down. To this point, threats of intervention have been all bark and no bite. Even so, the region's chaos and volatility, plus the desperation of competing capitalists, could mean that war in Africa is on the horizon. Meanwhile, the Niger generals are rallying thousands of workers behind them in a move to oust the post-colonial French bosses, who maintain four military bases and two thousand troops in the country.

If history is any guide, however, the latest set of misleaders will do nothing to improve the lives of workers in Niger. As in Mali and Burkina Faso, these workers will be forced to renegotiate the terms of their misery and exploitation with Russian imperialists and military gangsters. The only way out of this imperialist hell is a communist revolution. True independence for workers means smashing the deadly capitalist system that breeds imperialism, poverty, and war in the first place.

Uranium and imperialist atrocities

The Sahel, a vast region south of the Sahara Desert, is rich in gold and oil. It has long been in the lethal chokehold of French imperialism. Beginning with a bloody invasion in 1899, the French army committed unspeakable atrocities, bombing villages and murdering tens of thousands of Nigeriens before bringing the country under colonial control in 1922. Although Niger gained its independence in 1960, France reasserted its control eight years later, after the discovery of uranium in the Saharan city of Agadez (European Environmental Bureau, 10/18/17).

Niger today is the world's seventh-largest source of exploitable uranium, which generates more than 70 percent of France's energy supply (The Guardian, 8/5). The French bosses continue to rake in massive profits through Orano, a multinational mining company that is 90 percent French-owned. To sustain this exploitation, the French bosses have used graft and terror by local security forces to help keep brutal and corrupt politicians in power to do their bidding (The Guardian, 8/5). Fueled by inter-imperialist rivalry, anti-regime terrorists have gained strength throughout the region. Even after the U.S. spent millions to build a military base and sent 1,500 troops to Niger in 2014, the violence has intensified (The Intercept, 8/2). Now the chickens have come home to roost. Power-grasping monsters like General Abdourahmane Tchiani, a former United Nations "peacekeeper" who was trained at a U.S. military academy, is leading a move to steal the French and U.S. turf (The Intercept, 8/10).

Tchiani has been emboldened by coup leaders in Mali and Burkina Faso, who declared that any invasion of Niger by ECOWAS troops would be a declaration of war against them as well. The new capitalist rulers in Niger are standing defiant. They have suspended the country's constitution, revoked defense agreements with France, and prevented foreign planes from landing (Vox, 8/12). With the coup now entering its third week, French bosses are desperate to protect their foothold in the region, including the $13 billion dollar Trans-Saharan pipeline designed to send oil through the Mediterranean and break France's dependency on Russian oil (DW, 7/28/2022). The U.S. bosses, meanwhile, are faced with ceding more ground to China's bosses, who own two-thirds of Niger's oil fields and want to build a 1,200-mile pipeline through Benin to the Atlantic. The Niger coup gives China a huge opportunity to expand its imperialist presence (The China Project, 8/6).

Down with French imperialism!

While French bosses rake in billions from Niger's mineral riches, ten million workers and youth live in extreme poverty. They are devastated by famine, pollution, and a lack of drinkable water due to capitalist-caused climate change. Thousands are being slaughtered by terrorist groups aided and abetted by French and U.S. imperialists. When workers flee their homes, they are killed or enslaved by smugglers, or succumb to the dangerous journey through the Agadez (UNHCR, 5/4/22). The French bosses had relied on their puppet Bazoum's efforts to terrorize migrants at Niger's borders and stem migration to Europe (Al Jazeera, 7/26).

After the coup, on the eve of the sixty-third year of Niger's independence, 30,000 workers took to the streets shouting "Down with France!" while waving Russian flags. The French bosses are under siege within their borders and without. Workers in France have sustained an open rebellion against raising the retirement age and to protest racist police brutality. In France's former colonies, from Africa to Haiti, coups d'etat, mass demonstrations, and seizures of fuel depots are the order of the day. But for the international working class, it's not enough to exchange one set of capitalist exploiters for another. We need to take that slogan further–to "Down with capitalism!" Workers in Niger need Progressive Labor Party, not another coup or "democratically elected" African misleader who's only looking for a share of imperialist spoils while maintaining the dictatorship of the bosses.

Russia vs. U.S. proxy war

As the Niger coup unfolded, Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted a summit with African leaders in St. Petersburg, hoping to expand Russia's growing influence in West Africa. Using the mass-murdering mercenary Wagner Group, Russia's bosses are trading its military services in exchange for minerals and other natural resources. They cynically use anti-colonial, anti-Western rhetoric as they exploit and slaughter workers. The old Soviet Union is still viewed favorably by many workers in Africa because of its help in overthrowing their European colonizers. Though Russia's position in West Africa remains tenuous, and they are spread thin by the Ukraine war, one thing is clear: their presence in the region has escalated the stakes of the Niger coup.

Western Africa has become a flashpoint in the imperialist competition between the U.S. and Russia. Both sides, whether through drone strikes or the Wagner group, are indiscriminately murdering workers in the region and pushing many into jihadist militias. As long as the working class in Niger is weakened by ethnic divisions and nationalist illusions, they will continue to be the imperialists' sacrificial lambs. Even so, these workers' militant protests show that they are hungry for an alternative. That alternative is communist revolution, led by Progressive Labor Party! From Africa to South Asia, from Latin America to Australia, we are building an anti-racist, antisexist, internationalist movement to smash this rotten imperialist system and build a new world run for and by workers. Join us! ✪

Loretto strikers defy racist healthcare system

CHICAGO, August 11—Over 200 multiracial workers ended their strike with Loretto Hospital today, capping off 11 bold days of militant defiance towards the capitalist bosses' rotten, racist healthcare system. By withholding their labor through striking, the workers were able to gain wage increases, steps towards safer staffing, and the recognition of Juneteenth as a paid holiday.

Comrades from the international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) were proud to support and learn from our fellow workers as we visited the picket line almost daily. We brought hundreds of CHALLENGE to distribute, dozens of tamales, as well as a letter of support with signatures from another nearby hospital. Most importantly, we shared the powerful ideas of communist revolution and multiracial unity as the best means to challenge this profit system.

By organizing on the job and joining unions, we can certainly force the bosses to give up some concessions they wouldn't otherwise give up. But as long as healthcare or any other industry remains in the hands of the capitalist bosses, they will have the upper hand to make their profits primary over our needs. We invite all workers worldwide to join and help build PLP as the force that will destroy racist, sexist capitalism and replace it with a worker-run communist society!

Capitalism kills — heat up the class struggle

The dangerous racist conditions inside Loretto Hospital were brewing for some time before they boiled over in the form of this strike. As a safety-net hospital that serves mainly Black residents on the city's west side, the workers at Loretto serve as a crucial resource to those going through mental health crises or struggling with substance abuse. The fact that the hospital bosses would cry broke and allow conditions to worsen so bad inside is a plain racist attack on both the workers and the patients.

Like many other capitalist institutions, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 greatly sped up the decline inside Loretto. In 2021, the hospital bosses found themselves under federal investigation after it was discovered that top executives were funneling scarce vaccines away from workers to wealthy residents downtown (Block Club Chicago, 11/2/21).

Recently, there has been a staff turnover rate of around 60 percent, which leads to chronic understaffing of departments, overwork, and injuries (WGN9, 7/31). Earlier this year, a patient in the Emergency Room overdosed in the bathroom and afterwards died because there were not enough staff to work the department (WBEZ, 8/2). One thing is clear: capitalism kills!

These attacks and countless others from the bosses helped stir an above average level of urgency and militancy among these strikers. Even though the strike lasted eleven days, they kept up their energy and resolve. Beyond just chanting and marching, they pushed the limits by being openly confrontational with the hospital bosses.

In one instance, workers pasted printouts of safety violations all over a hospital vehicle. As security attempted to tear down the notices, even more workers came forward to replace the ones taken down! On another day, strikers banded together to block deliveries from entering the hospital in order to apply more pressure.

The length and boldness of the strike definitely got to the bosses. On one of the last days, an off-duty kkkop/security guard got openly confrontational with strikers on the picket line, threatening "I've got two [ammunition] clips for every one of you" and even putting his hands on the neck of one of the workers! All the other workers immediately rushed to the defense of their fellow striker.

It was a scary and despicable act, but it no doubt exposed the clear connection between the bosses and their attack dogs in the cops and the military to enforce their class rule. As capitalism slides deeper into global crisis and more open fascism, we need to be prepared as workers to confront the bosses' physical attacks through the organized force of a Party.

Reform and revolution

The outcome of the Loretto strike shows both the potential and the limits of fighting for change under capitalism. On the one hand, workers were able to band together and gain a glimpse of our power and our essential role to make the system run. On the other hand, the hospital was allowed to stay open the entire length of the strike with many non-union workers still crossing the picket line without the union leadership making any real effort to win them over to the side of the strikers. Even with a new contract, many of the working conditions are still at the whim of the bosses who will violate them in no time.

PLP fights openly for a communist society where we don't share any power with the bosses. It would be working people – like those of us on the Loretto picket line – who would be in charge of making decisions and running society collectively based on our needs as a class, without any money, wages or profit. Although under communism we would still have plenty of difficulties, it truly represents the interests of the international working class and a future free from racism, sexism, and exploitation.

A communist salute

We raise a salute to the workers of Loretto for sharpening the class struggle against the racist bosses! We are excited to follow up with new friends that we've made on the picket and are ready to advance with you on the long but rewarding path to a communist world!✪

Striking hotel workers face police & union misleaders

SANTA MONICA, CA, August 12—The summer of 2023 continues to see workers' struggles all over the Los Angeles area coming to a head. From striking writers and actors to education workers at the Los Angeles Unified School District and the University of California systems, hotel workers of Unite Here Local 11 have joined the fight back, beginning a series of multi-day, rolling pickets on July 2nd. While the rolling pickets make it difficult to sustain regular support as the locations are constantly changing, Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members and friends have joined the various picket lines around the city learning about their struggle, distributing Party leaflets and CHALLENGE to reinforce the fact that their struggle remains interconnected with the struggle of all workers. The vast majority of workers we spoke to welcomed our support and took our literature.

Bosses attack!

On Saturday, August 5, PLP members and friends joined the picket lines of hotel workers of the Viceroy and Fairmont Miramar hotels in downtown Santa Monica. Not long after we showed up to the picket line at the Viceroy, the union led a 1-mile march down Ocean Drive, a busy street full of tourists, to the Fairmont Miramar. Shortly after the march arrived, the hotel bosses had their security attack the workers which was quickly followed by the Santa Monica KKKops, who arrived to protect hotel property and try to intimidate the workers. They effectively split the

march in two and kettled (surround protestors for a time and not allow them to leave) them with a barrier and wall of cops and cop cars.

After being released without any arrests, the workers continued with their rally. The hotel bosses tried to drown it out by cranking up the volume of their music but the union leaders continued with their speeches, and demonstrators stood their ground. However, as

Continued on page 5

Pakistan: cadre school builds internationalism

PAKISTAN, July 23—Thirty-three families participated in a Progressive Labor Party (PLP) Summer Cadre School in Pakistan for one week in July. Some of the topics that were discussed included: How establishing a classless society is the only way the working class can get rid of poverty and exploitation. How communism is the only way to make this world a prosperous and peaceful place to live without prejudices and slavery. How the bosses are making the working class emotionally enslaved by injecting religious and racial prejudices. How the bosses are spreading fundamentalism, nationalism, racism and sectarianism to keep the working class divided and fighting with each other. How to build the fight against ethnic and racial divisions that the bosses spread in the working class. How to build a communist party and movement for a workers led revolution. The school was held at a hilly station at the border of India and Pakistan.

It was very nice to see the people on the other side of the border waving their hands and exchanging good words with us. People from India and Pakistan were separated by a 25-30 meters wide river. We showed them the small banner displaying the PLP monogram with "Fight for Communism" and "One flag, one fight…Workers of the world unite." We also threw some CHALLENGEs in English and Urdu by wrapping stones with them and it was very fascinating when some people kissed them to show their love for us and communism.

Discussing plans for fightback

We chalked out a plan of activities for the remaining months; we analyzed the tactics we used to meet new people and evaluated our struggle while participating/organizing reform activities. Young and senior comrades were excited to explore new ways to strengthen our struggle at the workplaces, campuses, shops and farms. We also discussed the political situation in Pakistan and reached the point that the political chaos, devastating economic situation, terrorism and surveillance is a result of inter-imperialist rivalry as well as the enmity among the pro-China and pro-U.S. groups in the bureaucracy, establishment and ruling class.

We, the working class, know that bosses are also using misleaders from the trade unions to protect the interests of the capitalist class. These misleaders are being supported by every means to spread illusion and fear among the workers. They never talk against the contractual workforce being employed by the bosses to earn more profit without fear of strikes, they never struggle for unionizing the workers and they never help the harassed, tortured or injured workers.

Most of the discussion was led by young comrades. They took interest in the history of the Party and how our Party matured our line from nationalism to communism. Participants were enthusiastic while discussing base building and participating/organizing reform struggles. Young students and senior workers shared the experiences they got while participating in strikes and sit-ins. Comrades were keen to share their experiences and learn lessons from international comrades.

We concluded our summer camp by endorsing, appreciating and congratulating the new leadership collective at the 2023 PLP convention. After singing The Internationale and chanting slogans like "Long live communism, down with imperialism", "One flag one fight, workers of world unite" and "Long live PLP" our summer camp was over. ✪

From Hawaii:

Maui fires, a capitalist disaster

HAWAII, August 15—Real estate developers, bankers, and tourist billionaires were exploiting the natural beauty of Maui and the labor of local workers. Seventy thousand visitors were on the island on any given day. Everything was cool, right?

In fact, there was plenty to worry about. An initial fire broke out on August 8 at 12.22 a.m. in Upcountry Maui. Another brush fire was reported near the Lahaina elementary school at 6:37 a.m. Subsequent fires started nearby. Horrific flames began tearing through the small town just after 5 p.m., lasting through the night. What seems like a disaster of nature is actually the result of the failure of capitalism to safeguard lives and the environment.

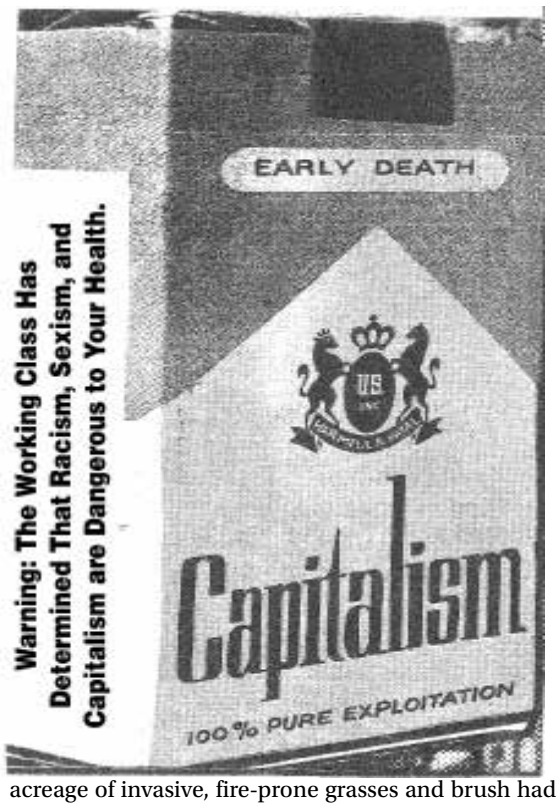
The only way to break out of traps like this is to end the capitalist system which sets the stage for the wars, disasters and tragedies we experience all over the globe. And for this, a revolutionary communist party is needed. Progressive Labor Party is a workers' party, organizing to build a movement for communist revolution worldwide; everyone who wants to see this system end once and for all should join. Disasters like the Lahaina inferno should be a wake-up call.

State, media, and business neglect our class

Actually, the government was aware of the potential for disaster. Local scientists had published warnings well in advance of the inferno that took too many lives and disappeared 1,300 people. Hurricane Lane in 2018 was the immediate cause of multiple fires on Maui and Oahu. Scientists from the University of Hawaii (UH) analyzed all the causes, warning anyone who would listen of the dangers ahead. See their warnings in "Fire and Rain: The Legacy of Hurricane Lane in Hawaii" (June, 2020).

Vast tracts of grasses cover thousands of acres of unmanaged land in Hawaii. This makes the islands vulnerable to fires. This should, of course, raise serious questions. Why was the land around Lahaina unmanaged? Who actually owns that land? Why was it abandoned to the point where human life was placed at such grave risk?

Disaster prevention did not seem to be on the agenda for the state's well-paid officials. An ecosystem fire specialist at UH had for years warned that a growing



acreage of invasive, fire-prone grasses and brush had overtaken the abandoned agricultural lands once used for sugar and pineapple plantations.

The media and opportunistic lawyers seeking clients seem eager to only blame Hawaiian Electric Company for the disaster. Power lines blown over by strong winds might have sparked the fire, and the company hadn't bothered to invest in preventive systems. However, there is plenty of blame to go around. It should be clear that the problem was more basic than a few dozen fallen power poles.

The cause is capitalism

The fundamental cause of the tragedy is the economic and social system we are trapped in—the system that leads to dangerously unmanaged land next to over-developed tourist facilities. Capitalism produces a government that cares not about protecting the lives of workers. In fact, it is an obstacle we must overthrow, fight for revolution, and build a new society based on communist principles.

It is clear that Maui has been overdeveloped only to benefit the owners of a multi-billion-dollar tourist industry. Hawaii's Department of Business Development and Tourism reported that, during the first half of the year, Maui drew more than 1.48 million visitors, or 30 percent of all Hawaii tourists. Visitor spending was $3.5 billion in the same period. That is clearly enough capital for adequate fire-prevention and sufficient fire-fighting personnel and equipment.

No escape from a global system

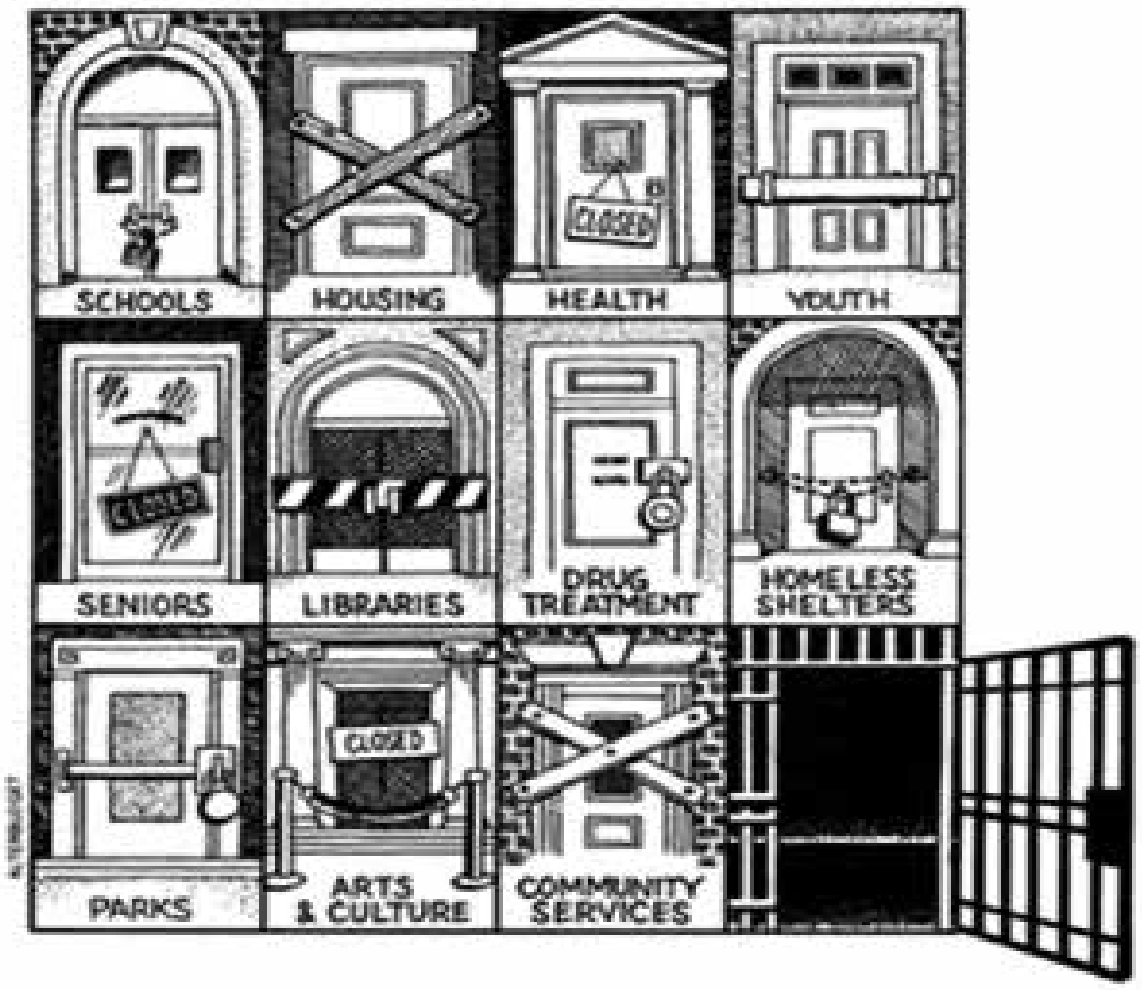
Despite the priorities of profit, enough of historic Lahaina, with its breathtaking views of offshore islands, remained to attract visitors seeking to briefly escape the capitalist rat race. But, we are trapped in a global system from which there is no escape. Surviving Lahaina workers and visitors have learned a bitter lesson.

A 74-year-old survivor doesn't blame firefighters for not warning him in advance. He said a long line of politicians allowed fire stations to be understaffed. Firefighting efforts were hampered by a small staff — 65 firefighters at most working at any given time in Maui. The Fire Chief pointed out that they're responsible for three whole islands — Maui, Molokai and Lanai. They had 13 fire engines and two ladder trucks, all designed for on-road use. The department doesn't have any off-road vehicles, which are needed to attack brush fires thoroughly before they reach populated areas.

Maui County's 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan identified 132,000 acres with burnable vegetation requiring long-term management with practices such as those used in agriculture. Seventy miles of fire breaks and 90 miles of fuel breaks were needed. However, under capitalism, politicians are induced to put profit first, public safety second. Even though the potential for destruction far outweighed the cost of prevention, political leaders were encouraged by big business to keep taxes down and budgets low.

It is important to learn why this failure occurred. Even more important is the need to learn how the capitalist system set the stage for catastrophe, and why and how this system must be brought to an end. ✪

Students, not suspects! Fight racist policing in schools



Prince George's County, MD. August 12—There's a new Black "sheriff" in Prince George's County—Superintendent of PGC Schools, Millard House, who quickly outed himself as serving ruling-class interests. His first racist policy is putting metal detectors in county high schools and some middle schools and requiring clear backpacks for students. As if having cops in the schools wasn't enough, he wants to perfect the racist school-to-prison pipeline! We reject our working-class students being treated like suspects and criminals!

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) calls on all readers to join the fight to defeat the entire capitalist system which generates systemic racism like these policies, which are aimed at weakening our unity and terrorizing our class, the working class. Our class needs to take power through communist revolution, where we will determine educational policies that ensure the full development of each of us to better serve our class globally.

Quick to respond

A news article in the local Hyattsville Life and Times (HLT) newspaper alerted that House would appear at an open house at Hyattsville Middle School (HMS), so PLP members moved into action. We made protest signs and copies of the HLT article critical of the new policy. We reached out to the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) at HMS and talked to the parents at the open house, sharing the HLT article widely.

Several parents gave us their names and contact information, angry at this new racist policy. One woman who had been a student in Brooklyn when metal detectors were put in the schools was furious to learn that this is still happening. She knew firsthand how it felt to be a student treated like a criminal! PLP has been fighting this same fight in Brooklyn for years (CHALLENGE, 10/9/2020).

PLP members have helped lead anti-police terror groups in Prince George's County for 50 years. Racist police brutality and the criminal (in)justice system are major weapons of the ruling class to kill, terrorize and intimidate our working class brothers and sisters. We have been part of the struggle to keep cops out of the schools. Today we continue the struggle for justice for William Green, murdered by police in January 2020, as the trial of this murdering cop comes up this fall.

We are spreading the word of these fights at the upcoming Greenbelt Labor Day festival on September 2 with a booth opposing the metal detector and backpack policies, while sharing copies of CHALLENGE to stress the need to build a long-term solution to racism: communist revolution! ✪

Striking hotel workers face police & union misleaders

Continued from page 3

expected, these misleaders made no connection between the role of police as protectors of private property nor of the politicians (their keynote speaker was a former mayor of Santa Monica) in maintaining capitalism and all its horrors. Two members of the Flores family also joined us and spoke to workers which helped reinforce our point about the role of the cops. One base member, a Black healthcare worker who was trapped with the workers in front of the hotel, also found being in solidarity with the workers powerful. Another young base member thought the Party's presence helped workers begin to acknowledge the link between their struggle and the capitalist system. He also participated in the 2022 University of California student worker strike in Davis. He noted that the Party's presence there could have had the same effect on the consciousness of those workers too.

Pacifism is not the answer

Hotel workers were not only attacked by security and KKKops at the Fairmont Miramar, picketers at hotels in Long Beach and Dana Point were also viciously attacked by security, management, guests, and a "celebrity" chef. In response, the union organized three peaceful protests at these hotels over the weekend. PL'ers and friends joined 200 workers and community supporters at the Fairmont Miramar rally. As expected the union misleaders pushed pacifism and nonviolence as a response to the violent attacks. Going so far as to say workers should not defend themselves if attacked. They even pointed out the scum security guard who led the attack to say that they are on the same side as the hotel workers even though they obviously made a choice to be in solidarity with hotel management. Most of the speakers were union reps and clergy. The only worker who spoke repeated the

call for non-violence and praised the union leadership. Despite this we were able to distribute 20 CHALLENGEs and leaflets and make good connections with workers.

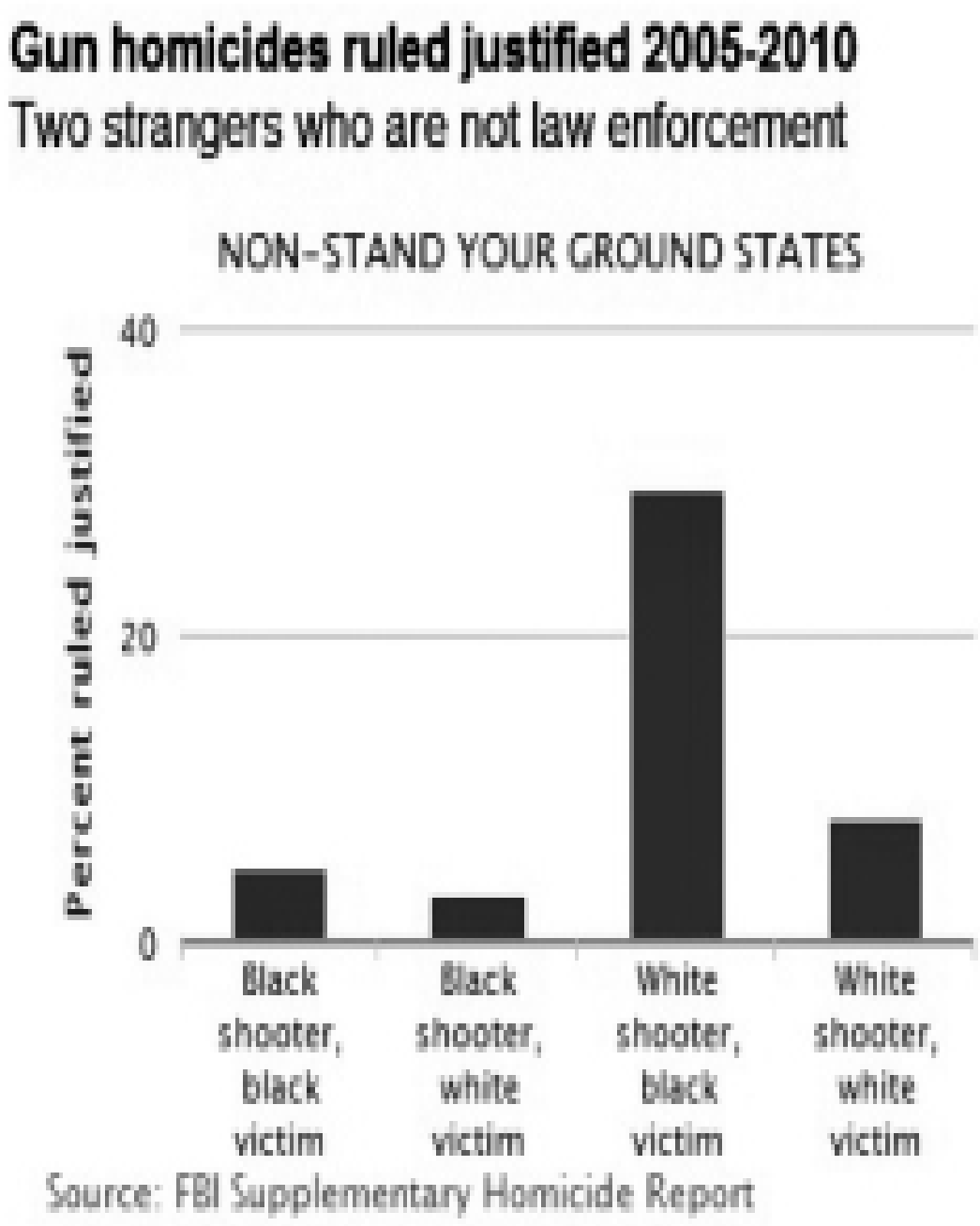
Record profits = record exploitation

Hotel workers in Los Angeles (LA) County make a dismal $19.73 per hour and can't even afford to live in the areas where they service hotels that charge rates that reach over $400-600 per night! It's disgusting! According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a single mother would need to make over $40 an hour to afford a 2-bedroom apartment in LA County, still well above the proposed $30 an hour minimum in Santa Monica that the union is pushing for. In a survey by the union, 53 percent of workers said that they either have moved in the past five years or will move in the near future because of soaring housing costs (www.businesswire.com, 7/18). Meanwhile, the hotel industry in Santa Monica is booming, with revenue exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

Many workers already live more than two hours away due to the exorbitant cost of living in LA County. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of hotel workers are Latin women, illustrating the gross sexism and racism built into capitalism's profit system. A political and economic system that can't meet the basic needs of the working class does not deserve to exist and needs to be smashed. That is why PLP calls for communist revolution, to smash these lousy conditions and put the working class in command.

Our leaflet emphasized how these workers' fight remains especially interconnected with many recent struggles of workers who have struck or are currently striking. Strike fever here is spreading- LA City workers also conducted a one day walkout on August 8th. The leaflet also highlighted the limited power of strikes led by reformist union leaders who are loyal to a capitalist system which requires exploitation in order that profits be maximized. Even if union demands result in temporary gains, in a few years hotel bosses along with their allies in the bosses' government will again resist providing even minimally decent conditions for the workers. Moreover, the leaflet exposed the importance of racism and sexism in justifying the super exploitation of marginalized workers. As the strikes continue, Party members and friends in LA will remain committed to supporting hotel workers, writers, and actors throughout the summer. ✪

Charge capitalist state with racism



BALTIMORE, August 3—The courts are institutionally racist, and serve the capitalist class; it's their legal system, not ours, and it's definitely not neutral. With this in mind, at last week's West Wednesday rally, a member of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) explained his anger about the trial of a local squeegee worker, facing murder charges.

Last summer, a young Black man was working informally to earn tips at an intersection, asking drivers if they'd like their windshield washed. On July 7, 2022 a white motorist, Timothy Reynolds, pulled over haphazardly amidst heavy traffic, and walked across about 10 lanes of traffic with a metal bat to attack the squeegee workers. He forcefully swung at them, an immediate and deadly threat. One of the squeegee workers, in defense of himself and others, shot Reynolds, who was pronounced dead at a hospital.

A squeegee worker was jailed and charged. A PLP comrade attended his trial, along with many others, to support the squeegee worker. Two days later, our comrade—angered by what he heard and saw—spoke about it at the decade-strong West Wednesday rally, which is a weekly protest against the murder-by-kkkop of Tyrone West in 2023 & all victims of police terror.

Courts & laws defend racism

Bat-wielding Reynolds, as explained by a defense attorney, had no contact with any of the squeegee workers before getting out of his car. He was immediately in racist, attack mode, not due to any personal experience that day.

What's more, he was 6' 3" and weighed over 300 pounds, compared to the accused squeegee worker, who was 14 years old and probably weighed less than half as much.

One of the defense lawyers, Mr. Gordon, kept getting his legal arguments objected to—perhaps 20 times in rapid succession, and nearly always sustained by the judge—when he tried to speak about the motive for Reynold's violence. Mr. Gordon and Judge Schiffer then had quite a battle. Gordon said instead of denying racism, we should be dismantling it.

The judge appeared to get red and said, loudly and defensively, that her blocking of his arguments was due—she claimed—to a lack of relevance, and because the remarks were inflammatory. They sure were inflammatory…to her!

It was disheartening to see—to avoid jailing the squeegee worker for many years—the jury would need to reject 1st degree murder, 2nd degree murder, and manslaughter.

According to the capitalist's laws, a finding of self-defense meant the jury had to agree the squeegee workers had retreated. What a messed up, capitalist legal system, expecting people to retreat when facing relentless, violent racism!

An article in The Sun (7/23/22), pointed out a major inequality in the outcome of such trials: "A 2013 Urban Institute analysis of FBI homicide data found that killings where the defendant was white and the victim was Black are 10 times more likely to be ruled justified than if the roles are reversed."

On top of all that, the judge failed to instruct the jury about an important exception to the requirement for retreating. For a finding of self defense, retreat is not required if retreat would be too dangerous. If the squeegee workers had started walking away, retreat would mean their backs were vulnerable to Reynold's deadly bat.

'It's all about the money'

So, yes, our comrade was deeply angered, and expressed that at West Wednesday!

The capitalist framework within which jurors must function, unfortunately, led to a conviction for manslaughter, not the worst, but still meaning up to ten years in jail. It's important to note that no prison sentence can address the racist ideas that led to this murder; capitalist "justice" is a lie!

At West Wednesday, our comrade said, "People often think the courts are neutral, that the police are neutral, that the government is neutral. But the fact of the matter is, the majority of the laws in the United States deal with property relations. And about half of one percent of the people own the vast majority of property: not just land, but businesses and machinery too: anything that can produce a profit. So the legal system is really their legal system. It's 100 percent biased. And we saw that in this trial!"

Tyrone West's sister, giving the major speech at that same rally, hit the nail on the head! "This is a dirty system… When you have the media portraying squeegee kids as goons, thugs, as bad people, as soon as a racist comes in town, they're coming to attack… They have so many laws that are not right. You've got all these racist judges… They don't want to address racism. It feeds this capitalist system… It's all about the money, and that's sad and disgusting… I just feel like we need to smash and trash this system!" ✪

The Soviet Union and the Comintern: Organizing the Dream of a Workers' World

Marxist communism was an international movement from the moment Marx and Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto in 1848, "Working people of all countries, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains." Before that, the Haitian, French and American Revolutions had all included a strain of internationalism.

This dream of a workers' world built on smashing the capitalist institutions of borders and nation-states found its first organizational form in the International Workingmen's Association, the "First International," founded in London in 1864 with delegates from several European nations, who drafted Marx to write its program.

A fundamental split between communists and anarchists (in shorthand, Marx and Bakunin, the red and the black) led to Marxists forming the "Second International" (1889-1916), which floundered during World War I because most socialists abandoned internationalism and backed their own capitalist governments in that war.

The Bolsheviks, who not only opposed all capitalist armies in World War I but created a social revolution in the very midst of that war, revived the dream of a workers' world by backing the "Third International," the Comintern or Communist International (1919-1943), almost immediately after taking power in Russia, and while still fighting the capitalist expeditionary forces invading Russia to end the revolution.

Defying patriotism, birthing internationalism

The Comintern defied bosses' patriotism everywhere, condemned the betrayal of internationalism by the Social Democratic parties of the Second International, and called on workers to fight for their class, not their country. It was an organization of communist parties aligned with the Soviet revolution. They planned to take power as the Bolsheviks had in as many regions as possible, unified by the same political thinking and in a single disciplined alliance of all the world's communist parties.

Unlike the First and Second Internationals, the Comintern had a center and a foundation in the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or Soviet Union for short), the first workers' state. The Soviet Union was NOT a "nation" on the bourgeois model, but a union of many socialist republics, regardless of nationality, formed from the huge polyglot territory that had been Tsarist Russia. The very name of the USSR, refused any national name or identity, and implicitly was confined to no one region. It was an indefinitely expanding collection of states where communist workers took power, in principle extending to the whole world.

Because the USSR's workers' state existed and defied all efforts to overthrow it, the Comintern gave a newly powerful organizational form to Marx's dream that "Workers have no country; their country is the entire world." The USSR was never Russian merely, but "Soviet"—a collective form of government by the working class which could be a model for communist organization of society anywhere in the world.

The Comintern was a major achievement of the Bolshevik Revolution. When one of the Comintern parties, the Chinese Communist Party, established another workers' state in a second huge area of the world, the dream of a workers' world looked closer than ever. But the Comintern was never revived, and today both of those gigantic workers' states have reverted to capitalism with a vengeance. That story of tragic loss includes the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943. It was a concession to the capitalist allies during World War II. The communist parties agreed to suspend communist organizing for social revolution in the allied countries.

The failures and contradictions of the old movement

The Progressive Labor Party believes that a further organizational step needs to be taken—the abandoning of national or nation-state-based communist parties for a single international democratic-centralist party to which all revolutionary communists belong. If we want to smash all borders and the very idea of the nation-state, then our organizing weapon, our communist party, must from the get-go incorporate that principle and refuse to be confined by national borders in its organizing. The USSR and the Comintern contained this idea in principle, but nationalism as an ideology and a culture was too powerful within the communist movement for our comrades of that era, or of the era of the Chinese Revolution, to overcome.

Today the capitalists themselves have created a world more international in social production, distribution, and communication than it has ever been. A communist state or "Soviet" established throughout many regions of the world by revolutionary struggle is more than ever a possibility because of this "globalizing" development of the capitalist system. Capitalist classes still hang on to the nation-state, however, much more than international forms like the United Nations. The capitalists need the nation-state as the basis of their rule by armed force. It is their state monopoly of violence, which they use against workers and against competing capitalists.

It remains for us as communist workers of every country, of the whole world, to organize ourselves based on a single "Soviet," idea and to struggle in a single international revolutionary party for that further realization of the old dream of a workers' world.

When our comrades of the future succeed, it may well be again, as the Bolshevik and Chinese comrades found, in the ruins left by another barbaric global war. War between nations is itself one of the worst – and inevitable -- consequences of the capitalist system. Part of the dream of a workers' world, made so visible to us by the Bolshevik Revolution, is the end of the wars the capitalists' system of nation-states has always brought with it.

One world, one party fighting directly for communism

The Second International abandoned internationalism under the stress of World War I., and the Comintern eventually did the same thing, in part under the stress of World War II. They capitulated to nationalism. How many more such wars, and such betrayals, can we bear? Worker-soldiers of ALL armies must be organized by revolutionaries belonging to a single world party, even during a war as the Bolsheviks and the Chinese comrades did in their national armies.

It will be those workers with guns in their hands who build a new and lasting communist international. When they do, they will remember the great step forward towards internationalism taken by the Bolshevik Revolution. We communists of today in the PLP salute the Comintern, and will work in a single unified international party to realize its noble dream.

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

'The fight for African resources sharpens

BBC, 8/6–Niger has become the latest country in West Africa where the army has seized control, following Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Chad - all former French colonies. Since 1990, a striking 78% of the 27 coups in sub-Saharan Africa have occurred in Francophone states leading some commentators to ask whether France - or the legacy of French colonialism - is to blame? Colonel Abdoulaye Maiga, who was named prime minister by the military junta in Mali in September 2022, launched a scathing attack on France. Criticising "neocolonialist, condescending, paternalist and vengeful policies"...

Anti-French vitriol has also flourished in Burkina Faso, where the military government ended a longstanding accord that allowed French troops to operate in the country in February, giving France one month to remove its forces...François-Xavier Verschave, a prominent French economist, coined the term Françafrique to refer to a neocolonial relationship hidden by "the secret criminality in the upper echelons of French politics and economy". These ties, he alleged, resulted in large sums of money being "misappropriated".

Chinese and U.S. imperialists develop analyses to justify war

Foreign Affairs, July/August–In March, at the end of Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin stood at the door of the Kremlin to bid his friend farewell. Xi told his Russian counterpart, "Right now, there are changes—the likes of which we haven't seen for 100 years—and we are the ones driving these changes together." The Chinese leadership, from Xi on down, believes that the global architecture that was erected in the aftermath of World War II is becoming irrelevant and that attempts to preserve it are futile…Chinese leaders see the United States as the principal threat to their survival and have developed a hypothesis to explain their adversary's actions. Beijing believes that Washington is responding to domestic polarization and its loss of global power by ramping up its competition with China. U.S. leaders, according to this thinking, have decided that it is only a matter of time before China becomes more powerful than the United States, which is why Washington is trying to pit Beijing against the entire democratic world.

Workers in Libya continue to suffer after NATO attack

Al Jazeera, 8/14–Clashes have broken out in the Libyan capital Tripoli, residents said, after the reported seizure of a powerful armed faction commander by a rival force…Monday's clashes are already the worst to hit Tripoli for months, though there has been sporadic violence between armed factions in some other parts of northwest Libya in recent weeks. "We have heard gunfire for almost two hours now and we do not know what will happen. We fear for our safety," said one of the residents in Furnaj district late on Monday… Libya has had little peace or security since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising, and control has been divided between warring eastern and western factions since 2014. While there has been a ceasefire since 2020, there is no sign of a lasting political solution.

Another kkkop assault in Kenosha

AP News, 8/11–Police in Kenosha, Wisconsin, have launched an internal investigation after a video posted to social media appears to show an officer punching a Black man the officer mistakenly believed was involved in a hit-and-run crash…Police said that witnesses told them they saw two Black men and a Black woman flee toward an Applebee's restaurant. One witness said the woman was carrying a child, according to police…The officers tried to take the baby from the man and arrest him. The man yelled that he hadn't done anything wrong and officers should let him go. The video shows that after the officers removed the baby from his arms, they threw him to the ground and an officer began punching him as he ordered the man to put his hands behind his back. Officers then discovered the people responsible for the crash in the restaurant's bathroom…Police said the man who was punched wasn't responsible for the crash but tried to leave in defiance of officers' orders and resisted them.

OPPENHEIMER: SCIENCE UNDER CAPITALISM SERVES PROFIT WARS

Science in capitalism serves imperialists' war and profits. Science in communism will be used to end inequality created by the capitalists and to protect life in harmony with nature. Oppenheimer, the popular film directed by Christopher Nolan, is dedicated to the scientist Robert Oppenheimer who from 1941 to 1945 coordinated the Manhattan Project for the manufacture of the first nuclear bombs that were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing the death of more than 200,000 people, mostly civilians, and reducing both cities to rubble.

Although the director has declared that his film does not carry any explicit or hidden message, the reality is that, due to its ambiguity and lack of objectivity, this film is being used by the ruling capitalist class to prepare millions in the U.S. and around the world, for the need to use atomic bombs as they did in Japan - only now they are much more destructive. The film makes the same false, criminal argument that bombs save lives, just as President Truman states in a climactic passage of the film.

The film Oppenheimer describes a successful physicist with a brilliant and charismatic mind. It depicts his affinity for social activities that bring him into close contact with a group of communists - an association from which he distances himself when his patriotic dilemma forces him to embark on a military project to build the bomb before the Nazis. With the goal of stopping the Nazis, Oppenheimer assembles and leads an entire scientific community that consciously or unconsciously submits to the military interests of the ruling capitalist class.

The Soviet Red Army defeated the Nazis, not the A-Bomb

One crucial fact that the film omits is that the Red Army, without atomic bombs, was able to crush the Nazi army, driving the Nazis from their territory and liberating Europe. The Nazi defeat and their surrender in May 1945 made the bomb project less meaningful, as stated by some of the scientists involved. However, the military in charge of the project, President Truman and the ruling capitalist class, pushed the project until they achieved their true purpose: their military hegemony in the world. The scientist Isidor Isaac Rabi warned Oppenheimer that "the military only uses scientists for their warlike purposes."

The construction of the nuclear bomb was another episode in the submission of science to capitalist interests. Three months later, in August 1945, the bombs were used under the crude pretext of "forcing Japan to surrender" though militarily they were already defeated. The film does not deny or contradict this vile capitalist manipulation, nor does it unmask the true purpose of dropping the bombs - to intimidate the world, particularly the Soviets, and make clear the military power achieved by the American capitalist class. As we can see now, it ultimately served to unleash the arms race between the two imperialist blocs that continue to drag the world into more wars, wreaking massive levels of destruction.

As the true purposes of the arms race became apparent, many scientists refused to participate in the construction of the much more destructive H-bomb. Oppenheimer was one of them, which is why they discredited him, reviving his association with the communists, to invent an allegation of treason against him. The film does not unmask all this manipulation, rather, it tries to disprove the attacks on Oppenheimer as personal quarrels with Lewis Strauss, his former collaborator in the manufacture of the first bomb. The film shows how other renowned scientists such as Ernest Lawrence and Edward Teller , willing to collaborate in the arms race, betray Oppenheimer by testifying against him, while dozens of other scientists signed a public letter in their support.

Turn imperialist world war into communist revolution

In the context of the decline of North American and European imperialism, the imperialist alliance between Russia and China, and the growing division of the world into two imperialist blocs vying for control of the world, the dilemma presented in the film is as current as ever. The imperialists today threaten each other with the use of atomic bombs in Ukraine, Taiwan and any other disputed area.

Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. are about to approve a new military budget, the largest in history. The imperialists in Europe, Russia and China are also increasing their military budgets. The endgame of all the imperialists is war to control the world's wealth. The capitalists have shown that they build bombs to use them against people. Let's not doubt that they will use them again to maintain their control and their profits.

Capitalism means death and destruction. We need to put an end to all the capitalists and their bombs, and we can only do that with communist revolution. Communism means workers run society. Communism will not only end all wars, it will also restore the environment that capitalist irrationality and its thirst for profit has pushed to the brink of collapse. Communism will end poverty, inequality, racism, sexism and all the evils that affect the vast majority of the world's working population. Progressive Labor Party is in the fight for communism. JOIN US. ✪

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